

Our Mine Action Programme in Ukraine

July 2024





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Our Activities

FSD (Fondation suisse de déminage) is a Geneva-based humanitarian organisation that has been working for 26 years to protect civilians from landmines and explosive remnants of war.

Our teams locate and destroy explosive devices, conduct awareness-raising campaigns among affected populations, set up assistance projects for victims of accidental explosions and reinforce the capacities of local authorities and NGOs.

FSD has worked in some 30 countries since its founding in 1997 and currently employs close to 900 staff on four continents.

DEMINING

The precise localisation, detection and neutralisation of explosive devices is carried out by locally recruited and trained teams, sometimes assisted by specialised machines, drones and dogs.

RISK EDUCATION

Until mine clearance operations are completed, education about the dangers of explosive ordnance helps to raise awareness among the local population and prevent potentially lethal accidents.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE

FSD provides socio-economic support and facilitates access to medical care for mine accident survivors, enabling them to return to an activity compatible with their disability.

CAPACITY BUILDING

The training and mentoring of local authorities and NGOs is essential to ensure the sustainability of demining work and its ownership by the stakeholders in the concerned countries.

WEAPONS & AMMUNITION DESTRUCTION

FSD destroys obsolete or confiscated weapons and ammunition to prevent accidental explosions or use by armed non-state actors.

ADVOCACY

FSD participates in various mine action forums and working groups, and provides support to countries in fulfilling their obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

OUR IMPACT IN 2023

5,733,843 m2 cleared

234,850 people educated on the

risks of explosive ordnance

mine victims supported

5,093
explosive ordnance

5,202

weapons and ammunition destroyed





Current FSD Programmes



Mine clearance · Mine victim assistance



Support to the peace process - Socio-economic support to communities



Capacity building \cdot Mine victim assistance



 $\begin{array}{l} \text{Mine clearance} \cdot \text{Explosive} \\ \text{ordnance risk education} \cdot \text{Capacity} \\ \text{building} \end{array}$



Mine clearance · Explosive ordnance risk education · Capacity building



Mine clearance · Environmental remediation



Mine clearance · Explosive ordnance risk education · Capacity building





Background of FSD's Involvement in Ukraine

FSD's involvement in Ukraine dates back to early 2015, in the Donbas, along the line of contact between the Ukrainian government-controlled area and the separatist-controlled area.

Our teams started by deploying emergency risk education campaigns to drastically reduce the risk of civilian casualties until clearance was completed. This was achieved by educating the affected population on how to stay safe while living near mines and unexploded ordnance. Our survey teams then began assessing the contamination by explosive remnants of war.

In 2016, FSD started demining work, with around 50 local staff recruited, trained and deployed from the two operational bases located in Sloviansk and Mariupol. In the following years, these teams surveyed dozens of former battlefields and located hundreds of items of unexploded ordnance. In parallel, FSD supported Ukrainian institutions in establishing a national mine action authority.

At the end of February 2022, with the Russian military intervention, FSD's activities were suspended and reoriented for a few months to allow our staff to ensure the safety of their loved ones and to provide emergency humanitarian aid. In June 2022, FSD established a new operational base in Chernihiv, then another in the province of Kharkiv in November.

In 2023, FSD strengthened its operational capacities through the recruitment and training of staff and the acquisition of equipment. In 2024, two satellite operations offices were opened near Sloviansk in Donetsk province as well as in Kryvyi Rih, to service the northeastern part of Kherson province.



FSD staff member training on the use of drones for non-technical surveys (September 2023).



Aerial view taken by a drone showcasing a damaged building during non-technical survey (July 2023).





FSD's Mine Action Programme in Ukraine

The fighting in Ukraine has left behind millions of landmines, cluster munitions and other unexploded or abandoned ordnance, making it one of the world's most heavily mine-contaminated countries. It's estimated that about one-third of the country - an area four and a half times the size of Switzerland - may be contaminated with these remnants of war. These hazards not only threaten the lives of civilians but also hinder humanitarian efforts, reconstruction, the resumption of agriculture and the return of displaced people.

As of 15 July 2024, more than 600 FSD staff members are active in the provinces of Chernihiv, Kharkiv, and Donetsk. FSD will be operational full-time in Kherson province in the coming weeks.

Eighteen teams conduct surveys of suspected hazardous areas and twenty-five demining teams locate explosive devices in minefields and former battle areas. Specialised machines are used to prepare the ground for clearance in rural areas, while armoured construction machines help with the clearance of collapsed buildings. Three additional clearance teams are currently undergoing training for future deployment to Donetsk and Kherson provinces. Simultaneously, fourteen teams conduct risk education sessions in schools and villages, while online sessions and digital risk education campaigns are carried out on social media.

In 2023, FSD cleared over 320,000 square metres of land, including agricultural fields, village areas, towns and vital infrastructure. In the same period, more than 142,000 people attended FSD risk education sessions, learning to identify explosive devices hidden in their surroundings and adopt safe behaviours when encountering such items. Additionally, our digital risk education campaigns on Facebook and Instagram reached over 6 million impressions throughout the year.

Since March 2023, FSD has also been providing logistical support and advice to the Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine in the use of 8 ground-preparation machines. In July 2024, FSD is providing support to 14 additional SESU ground-preparation machines.







Objectives for the Next Twelve Months

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CONSOLIDATION AND EXPANSION OF OUR AREA OF OPERATION

In the second half of 2024, our primary focus will be to further increase our capacity with more specialised staff in Chernihiv and Kharkiv, to consolidate our presence in Kherson and Donetsk provinces and to start survey and risk education activities in Sumy oblast.

INCREASED USE OF DOGS, MACHINERY AND TECHNOLOGY

In the second half of 2024, FSD will deploy eight technical survey dogs and train local handlers, with certification planned by year-end.

New ground-preparation machines as well as vegetation cutters will be deployed. FSD is also working to develop new technical solutions aimed at safely accelerating demining operations. Locally-produced mine rollers, as well as large loop detectors mounted on remote-controlled vehicles, are currently in the process of being certified by the national authorities.

It is also planned to extend the use of drones to monitor machines. Additionally, first operational trials are planned for a drone equipped with a ground-penetrating radar designed to support non-technical survey.

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REINFORCEMENT OF LOCAL CAPACITY

FSD will establish a capacity-building partnership with a local mine action NGO, likely in the Kharkiv province, focusing on both the technical and institutional aspects of humanitarian mine action. Simultaneously, the technical skills of FSD local staff will be continuously reinforced through regular overseas training programmes.



RESOURCE MOBILISATION

Ukraine is FSD's largest humanitarian mine action programme. Despite our efforts, and those of other mine action actors, the contamination from mines and unexploded ordnance is extensive, and more financial support is required. As new regions are liberated additional tasks will await humanitarian deminers.

FSD is supported by major institutional and private donors but aims to further expand its activities and areas of operation to maximise our impact and efforts in clearing Ukraine of explosive hazards.







Our Funding

As of 15st of July 2024, our mine action activities in Ukraine are supported and funded by the following donors:

Switzerland

Full-fledged mine action programme in Kharkiv province and development of a new operational base servicing Kherson province. Funding is confirmed for four years by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. FSD is now a partner of Swiss Solidarity, which has supported our operations in Ukraine since 2023.

- United States of America
 Full-fledged mine action programme in the province of Chernihiv and Donetsk.
- World Food Programme & Food and Agriculture Organisation Full-fledge mine action programme focusing on small farms, up to 300 hectares, and household garden plots in Kharkiv province.
- Other foundations, Swiss cantons and cities, private donors General support for our programme in Ukraine.

FSD Ukraine's operational budget for 2024 amounts to 33 million Swiss francs. Proposals are currently being examined by various institutional partners to expand our action and speed up demining in the country.



Mine clearance is a methodical task. Deminers examine the ground centimetre by centimetre (February 2024).



FSD teams provide risk education sessions to children in schools and villages (March 2024).





FSD's Expertise



26 YEARS OF DEMINING OPERATIONS AND WORLD-RENOWNED EXPERTS

FSD has over 26 years of world-renowned expertise and experience in survey and demining operations, stockpile destruction, explosive ordnance risk education and victim assistance.

Our organisation implemented its first demining project in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1998. Since then, our deminers have cleared 1.5 million explosive devices worldwide. Our teams include several internationally recognised mine action experts who regularly contribute to key mine action publications.

FSD has designed and conducted mine clearance operations in some 30 countries since 1997, including Sudan, Laos, Iraq and Afghanistan. Several large-scale programmes involving the recruitment and on-site training of thousands of deminers have been successfully completed, including in Sri Lanka.



CONSULTING & LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING

FSD regularly advises national authorities on mine action (currently in Colombia, the Philippines and Ukraine) and helps set up demining coordination centres. Capacity-building projects are also carried out for local demining NGOs to eventually take over.



INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGIES

For years, FSD has been involved in research and development projects centred on the use of technologies in mine action. As a practical organisation active in the field, FSD is regularly consulted by universities and companies for research and development projects. FSD also assists organisations with field testing new kits. In Switzerland, FSD works closely with the Urs Endress Foundation, based in Arlesheim, and the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL).



A STRONG PRESENCE IN UKRAINE

FSD has been active in Ukraine since 2015. Our humanitarian mine action programme is today one of the largest in Ukraine. We have recruited, trained and deployed hundreds of staff and work in close coordination with the Ukrainian authorities, local and international actors and other humanitarian mine action organisations.



More information













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